

New Paltz, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced he has secured a key House panel's approval of a major investment that will allow the State University of New York at New Paltz to develop a test lab for solar energy research and development on behalf of the Department of Defense. Hinchey, a senior member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, secured approval from the subcommittee for the \$5 million investment.

"This investment would allow SUNY New Paltz to work with The Solar Energy Consortium in developing cutting edge solar technology for the Department of Defense," said Hinchey. "It will also engage students and faculty in a growing American industry, helping prepare them for the jobs of the 21st century. It's going to allow us to continue attracting new solar energy companies to the Hudson Valley."

While the Hudson Valley's solar energy industry is growing, many of the companies are just beyond their startup phase. With the Department of Defense (DoD) seeking to adhere to a 50 percent "Made in America" requirement for all solar energy related purchases, many of the region's solar companies are positioned to play a major role in that effort.

The investment for which Hinchey has secured initial approval would allow for the creation of a "test and characterization laboratory" led and staffed by SUNY New Paltz Engineering and Science professors and students. In this environment, equipment, knowledge, and tools would be shared and guidance would be available to assist companies in meeting the thick array of regulations and technical requirements set forth by DoD.

The funding would also be used by the business school to develop a program to help the region's solar companies navigate the procurement process. Its professors and students will help these emerging and growing companies to understand the newest competitiveness models, develop a culture of innovation, and understand how to best service the DoD in its solar needs.

Hinchey was joined by SUNY New Paltz Interim President Donald Christian and Vincent Cozzolino, CEO and Founder of The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) who detailed how the program will work.

"Collaborating with the Department of Defense and The Solar Energy Consortium will lead to wonderful learning opportunities for our students and research possibilities for our faculty," said Christian. "And such partnerships are consistent with our campus mission to address regional economic needs and with Chancellor Nancy Zimpher's strategic plan for the SUNY System to support solar energy development and to help new and existing New York businesses to innovate, prosper, and grow."

"I am proud and pleased that TSEC and SUNY NP will work together, through this grant, to service the many new solar companies in the region, said Cozzolino. "This project will help the companies grow through technical, business innovation, and analytical research support provided by the college community."

Earlier this year, Hinchey successfully amended the House's version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 to require all solar energy panels purchased by DoD through subcontracts be made by U.S. manufacturers. Hinchey's amendment built upon Buy American Act provisions, which require that products purchased directly by the federal government contain at least 50 percent of American content. The legislation must now be considered by the Senate.

"Every time I visited Afghanistan, I heard about the dangerous missions that are the source of a significant number of U.S. military casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Hinchey. "By shifting away from a dependence on oil and instead using more solar energy for military equipment in the desert, we can help save the lives of our troops who will no longer need to go on as many refueling missions. And through this investment and others, we can achieve that goal with technology that is researched and manufactured right here in the Hudson Valley."

Hinchey led the effort to establish The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) to build partnerships between local universities and solar energy start-ups. The cooperative and coordinated approach has helped create more than 600 solar jobs, with nearly 1,000 additional jobs expected in the next two years.

